January, 2002. The State Governments/UTs, including the Government of Andhra Pradesh, have reported that identification of BPL families has been completed.

Under the TPDS, the allocation of foodgrains to the BPL families is being made as per the Poverty Estimates of the Planning Commission, based on Expert Group's methodology, updated on the population base of the Registrar General, as on 1-3-2000. On this basis, the estimated number of BPL families in Andhra Pradesh is 40.63 lakhs against which the State Government have identified 113.60 lakh BPL families. The basis of allocation of foodgrains is being uniformly applied to all the States/UTs without exception.

Relaxation in existing labour laws

*338. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether with a view to boost the export, the Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industries has requested Government to relax the existing labour laws for particular economic zones and include labour as a Union subject;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the details of the labour interests likely to be affected thereby?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI SAHIB SINGH VERMA): (a) No Sir. Ministry of Labour have not received any such request from the Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industries.

(b) and (c) Does not arise in view of the answer to (a) above.

Revision of E.P.F. pension scheme

*339. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering a proposal to revise the E.P.F. Pension Scheme extending the benefit to all the employees who are member of E.P.F;

(b) whether Government are facing any practical difficulty in extending the benefit of pension to those who are not covered under the family pension scheme irrespective of their age limits;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) Government's views to enhance the pension amount on the basis of price index?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI SAHIB SINGH VERMA): (a) to (d) All members of the Employees Provident Fund Scheme who have joined on or after 16.11.95 are members of the Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995. All employees who have been members of the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) as on 15.11.1995 but, not members of the ceased Family Pension Scheme, 1971 can exercise option to be members of Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995.

Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995 is a defined benefit funded scheme. The benefits are paid out of the Pension Fund which are based on actuarial study. Age limit is one of the crucial factors, which affect the design and outlay in any pension scheme. As such, the benefit of pension cannot be given irrespective of age limits.

Pension under the Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995 is not linked with Dearness Allowance based on cost of living index. The Employees' Pension Scheme is a contributory scheme with limited resources. Therefore, it is not considered desirable to burden the scheme with unlimited liability which is likely to arise by linking the pension under the Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995 with the consumer price index. However, there is a provision in the EPS, 1995 for annual valuation of the Pension Fund. Based on valuation results as also the availability of resources, relief is granted to the pensioners, in addition to the minimum pension payable. Till date, four additional reliefs have been sanctioned.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Production of Khadi in Andhra Pradesh

2204. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) the production of Khadi in Andhra Pradesh during the last three years, year-wise;